

LETTERS

We Need to Invest In Peacekeeping Vehicles

Dear Sir:

I found COL Charles Lehner's "Bosnia Report" (May-Jun 96) and CPT Matthew Morton's "Balkan Report II" (Jul-Aug 96) to be informative and thought-provoking. My initial reaction was one of dismay, as both officers advocate the acquisition of non-standard vehicles, which would complicate the logistical and maintenance equations. After further contemplation, however, I have reached the conclusion that the authors are on the right track.

I am not sure how well suited the BV-206S would be to operation in other types of terrain — and I am more than a little uncomfortable with the articulated vehicle concept for general use — but for use in deep snow, the BV-206S seems to have proved itself. I am a bit puzzled by Tom Buonaugurio's letter in the July-Aug 1996 issue, wherein he states, "If a requirement for the (armored) BV-206S...does emerge..." Inasmuch as these vehicles are used for scouting and patrolling — combat duties — isn't the need for armor protection somewhat obvious? Indeed, why was the unarmored (SUSV) version bought instead of the BV-206S? (*The SUSVs deployed to Bosnia were from U.S. stocks stored in Italy. -Ed.*)

The use of the USMC 8x8 LAV also makes a great deal of sense for peacekeeping operations, if only to minimize damage to the road nets. As was pointed out, mission accomplishment and troop safety depend, to a degree, on the good will of the local populace, which is likely to be adversely affected if tracked vehicles destroy the infrastructure.

I must disagree with CPT Morton's view that the LAV-APC should be used because it offers a kinder, gentler image than tanks or M113s. It must be remembered that in peacekeeping operations, our forces are functioning as police. As such, we are there to preserve peace and order and, like a police officer, we must have the means — and it must be readily apparent that we do have the means — to inflict death and destruction on any would-be attacker; the LAV-APC lacks this ability. As was noted in COL Lehner's article, the "overwhelming firepower image" of the 1st Armored Division's tanks effectively underscored U.S. resolve in implementing the peace accords. This "big gun" intimidation factor should be included in any peacekeeping force, but in the form of the LAV-105, rather than the Abrams. The LAV-105 would be much more infrastructure-friendly and possess greater in-country mobility (on those narrow roads and MLC bridges) than the M1A1, with little loss of intimidation value or combat power; it would also have commonality

with the LAV-APC CPT Morton proposes for use by the infantry squads.

During the Cold War, the senior leadership tried to avoid involvement in OOTW, considering such operations as distractions from the Army's only valid reason for being: Warfighting! All of the budget and all of the training was dedicated to preparing to fight a major war. With the demise of the Soviet Union, the U.S. Army was effectively without a mission. Now the leadership embraces participation in OOTW, but the budget is still being spent on equipment for a major war (a low-probability event), while spending almost nothing on equipment for OOTW (a certainty).

If U.S. soldiers are going to continue to play the role of international policemen in peacekeeping operations, they should be given the right tools for the job. Divert a small percentage of the funding for projects that may never be needed (MLRS, BAT, Crusader, etc.) and buy the BV-206S, LAV-APC, and LAV-105 vehicles that are needed right now by our peacekeeping forces; in the long term, the "major war" projects will not suffer excessively, and the peacekeepers will be properly equipped for their task.

STANLEY C. CRIST
San Diego, Calif.

Mission Orders Concept Deserves More Than Lip Service

Dear Sir:

I appreciate the torrent of letters which followed my Jan-Feb 96 article, "Force XXI and the Death of *Auftragstaktik*." The response is exactly the sort of discourse I wanted to provoke. Personally, I really hope that the future which I postulated doesn't come to pass. On the other hand, is everything I suggested necessarily "bad"? As professionals, we should regularly reassess how we operate to determine (preferably BEFORE we make any changes) if we are executing to our fullest potential, and how we might improve still more. Different is not always bad. (I have to continually remind myself of that; I assume others do as well.) As a professional, I believe that my future, if not my life, depends upon the unrestricted and nurtured leadership abilities of our junior leaders. In my mind's eye, the Orwellian control by superiors displaced from the battle would equate to a death knell for our current primacy in military affairs. Independent action, the ability to make decisions, is the fuel which our Army thrives upon, especially in the combat arms. The *potential* future which I wrote about bodes ill for the development of the type of leaders I think we need. Yet I can also see that the same scenario could lead to quantum leaps in effec-

tiveness. It remains for greater minds to determine how this tightrope should be walked.

My concerns were identified in the article; several others said, "This will never be," and I would like to agree. But we've also yet to take into account how the soldiers and leaders after us will fight. Perhaps more than other generation, those growing up now are unique in their abilities. They've been exposed to technologies which have, as a generation, made them almost a society apart. How will they fight? The uniquely American Way of War has always taken advantage of our cultural biases and abilities. How will this new generation fit into our mold?

Right now, we preach *Auftragstaktik* (Mission Orders) to the exclusion of all other methods. We regularly claim to give subordinates the chance to use their initiative, especially in tactical matters. Yet at the same time, we produce 20-50 page OPORDS at the NTC and JRTC. In WWII, a Wehrmacht DIVISION OPORD was normally *verbal!!!* The best we can manage **might** be a five-page "matrix" order, and that is at the battalion level. Truth be told, while we say we want "Mission Orders," we practice "Orders Tactics" (*Behfelstaktik*). As an Army, we have yet to resolve this dichotomy. As much as we'd like to say that we promote initiative and subordinate control, how many have seen an attack at the NTC go off early, when the battalion commander saw an opportunity and thought he might get the jump on the OPFOR ahead of schedule? How about at company level? Platoon?

I am a strong believer in the concept of *Auftragstaktik*; I just have yet to see it in action. Perhaps when I do, I will also see true "maneuver" training at one of the training centers.

ROBERT L. BATEMAN
CPT, IN

Maneuver Warfare: Change the Culture First

Dear Sir:

I am writing to address, actually add to, Captain Christopher D. Kolenda's excellent article, "Reconnaissance in the Offense 'Command Push' vs. 'Recon Pull'" (*ARMOR*, July-August 1996). As I write this letter, I hope to add flavor to Captain Bateman's article, "Force XXI and the Death of *Auftragstaktik*." Good try, Captain Bateman, but *auftragstaktik*, as it was truly defined and practiced in the German military culture from Gerhard Scharnhorst thru Helmuth von Moltke to Hans von Seeckt's creation of Blitzkrieg, has really never existed in our Army. Our promotion system

tends to punish officers of strong character, the very ones we need in battle.

I must address the cultural foundation our Army must adjust to prior to executing maneuver warfare techniques such as "Recon Pull." It is this institutional foundation which is disregarded or simply not understood when authors, such as Captain Kolenda, address facets of maneuver warfare or advocate borrowing from the Germans' well-tried approach to war. Because they fail to address the needed military culture, these authors leave their sincere attempts at making our Army even better open to simple critics on the attrition side of the Army. These critics refuse to change our French-based doctrine and antiquated personnel policies, such as "up or out," which deny us the experience needed to execute this facet of maneuver warfare or the warfare we envision in TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5, *Force XXI Operations*.

Now, more toward what "Recon Pull" really is. As Captain Kolenda states, the U.S. Army employs the opposite, command push. What we need to adjust to in Force XXI doctrine is where our reconnaissance is pulling the commander, in fact the whole force. When we begin an operation, we do not know where this will take us. We know only that we are going to destroy the enemy. Now the opponents have almost replied that one who practices maneuver warfare could carry this to the extreme and have a war that began in Kuwait going to China or somewhere, but we must pre-suppose we have a force of soldiers we can trust. It is not as if we have given them no guidance. It is not as if we have sent the mentally inept to risk their lives for us. If we do that, not only are we morally irresponsible, but we are naive if we expect success. If we are unwilling to enlist the most intelligent members of society, we will not have Force XXI operations. We will have victory only when lucky or against gross incompetence. The issue here is that war is uncertain. The enemy is not likely to do it our way. We need to be constantly exploring and exploiting.

Our Army must encourage entrepreneurial soldiers as a revolutionary idea. Our Army must tolerate entrepreneurial officers — leaders, soldiers — as equally revolutionary. We did not have such an Army in Vietnam, Korea, or World War II, and we have slipped back into this mode now with the drawdown as an excuse. We won World War II and the Gulf War with the old kind of Army employing old "line up, tie in the flanks, and overwhelm with firepower" doctrine. Experience since then and against potential enemies shows that it does not work anymore.

Now, let me get back to "Recon Pull." The commander, being pulled along by his re-

connaissance, is not some helpless figurehead at the mercy of his subordinates. On the contrary, it is he who makes the force act as one instead of many disparate and disconnected entities. It is paramount, as Major General Maggart has stated in many of his "Commander's Hatches," that leaders be up there — up front with the fighting infantry or the lead tank. The advanced technology we are now playing with in our Advanced Warfare Experiments, especially in information technology, will delude us. IVIS will be capable of fully informing a commander in a sophisticated command and control vehicle. Not only can he talk to nearly anyone he wants; today, he can see almost anything he wants on a television screen. Yet, this fully informed commander in his C3 vehicle suffers a number of disadvantages.

First of all, he will become removed from the atmosphere of the front. We are influenced every second of our lives by whatever atmosphere we are in. As the battlefield has its atmosphere, so does the advanced command vehicle.

The atmosphere is our surroundings - visual, audible, psychological, and moral. A commander cannot know *a priori*, the atmosphere at the front. It is unpredictable, fluid, and electronically untransmittable to that little box. That is, you have to be there to know it, or you will never know it. It only comes through years of experience doing it, making mistakes, and trying it again, something we do not allow. Instead, our officer management system has too many officers in line waiting for their turn in order to be fair. This level of experience is part of what makes warfare an art form, and not a technological solution, as many would like to believe.

The atmosphere of the battlefield may be unleashed aggression, comrades encouraging one another, helping those who are down, sometimes amazing patience for the sake of stealth, and recognition that every soldier counts. The atmosphere of the command vehicle may be anxious unreleased tension, impatience, and dominance by one individual. Influenced by the atmosphere of the command vehicle, the commander is out of touch. His subordinates at the front know it and feel it. At the front, he would make different decisions, more likely to be those his men on the front would make. At the front, he sees only a narrow slice, but it is a relevant slice. He has a staff that can dwell in the command vehicle and study the rest of it. He need not ignore them. Nor need he be held prisoner by them. For even their "board slice" of information is a narrow slice of atmosphere. So the commander seeks and probes, just as do the reconnaissance troops Captain Kolenda speaks of. He seeks to be at the decisive point. Accepting the uncertainty of combat,

he is aware he cannot know in advance where that decisive point will be. Great commanders like Patton, or Rommel, who always seemed to know where the decisive point would be, and appeared there as if by a sixth sense, spent more of their time searching, realizing they were not at the decisive point, then moving on, exploring the front until they found it (this ability was only gained through commanding long enough to gain it).

A second disadvantage suffered by the commander in the rear command vehicle is that he loses time, despite what we are attempting to do by overwhelming him with instant information from hundreds of sources. (We feel this will take the place of experience.) Precious time! Information takes time to get to him accurately! More time is lost while he and his staff, doing things by consensus as we practice daily in peacetime, make a decision. Now, unless he has made his command vehicle and himself irrelevant by telling his soldiers to act without waiting (which is probably the best thing to tell them if he is going to remove himself from the fighting), more time is lost while they wait for his perfectly-formatted orders to be transmitted via IVIS.

A third disadvantage is the loss of confidence he will surely suffer if he is not seen by the soldiers who bear the real burden of combat. The commander may be the most noble man in the world, the hardest worker, the most intelligent, the bravest, but if they do not see him, they will not trust him, and they will gripe about his indolence. We mistrust what we do not see.

The soldiers doing the fighting need to know their commander is there, sharing the risks. A close camaraderie like no other known in the world is formed by those who fight and bleed together. The commander has a choice, becoming a part of that brotherhood or staying apart from it.

The bottom line in "Recon Pull," or just executing the style of warfare Force XXI is calling for, is trust. We must go back and define our culture which creates trust and not subtle dangers which exist in our evaluation systems and promotion boards. Trust is important in any style of fighting. But Force XXI, which calls for decentralization in a multitude of engagements, will depend on it. Without trust there can be no Force XXI operations. It simply will not work. The concepts that both Captains Bateman and Kolenda touch upon, Commander's Intent, *Auftragstaktik*, and Recon Pull, are impossible without it!

MAJ DONALD E. VANDERGRIFT
OEC
Alexandria, Va.